

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claim 1. (Original): A process for the soaking of dried or dry salted animal skins salted skin of animals comprising soaking the skins in aqueous solution of an alkaline protease enzyme isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus* at ambient temperature for 16 to 20 hrs.

Claim 2. (Original): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the skins are soaked in the presence of a preservative.

Claim 3. (Original): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the concentration of the enzyme for soaking is in the range of 0.125 to 0.5% of raw weight of the skins.

Claim 4. (Canceled)

Claim 5. (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim ~~[[4]]~~ 2, wherein ~~the concentration~~ the preservative is present in an amount in the range of 0.005 to 0.01% of the raw weight of the skin.

Claim 6. (Original): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.

Claim 7. (Original): A method for dehairing of dried or dry salted animal skins using an alkaline protease isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus*, comprising applying to the flesh side of a soaked skin a paste comprising sodium sulphide, protease enzyme, a wetting agent and a suspension agent for a period of 12 to 20 hrs., or suspending the hides in a mixture comprising protease enzyme, sodium sulphide and water for 20 to 30 hrs. and removing the hair.

Claim 8. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is in the range of 1.5 to 3.0%

Claim 9. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is in the range of 0.5 to 2%.

Claim 10. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the concentration of sodium sulphide is 0.5%.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the wetting agent comprises a non-ionic detergent ~~or a conventional detergent used in the tanning industry.~~

Claim 12. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the suspension agent is selected from the group consisting of kaolin, chalk paste, and bentonite.

Claim 13. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the enzyme concentration is in the range of 1.5 to 3.0% (w/w tyrosine), wherein the sulphide concentration ranges from 1.5 to 3.0% , wherein the pH varies between 7 to 10, and wherein the treatment time varies from 18 to 30 hrs.

Claim 14. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.

Claim 15. (Original): A method for the bating of dried/dry salted animal skins, comprising applying an alkaline protease enzyme isolated from *Conidiobolus coronatus* to the skins at a pH in the range of 8.5 to 9.5, wherein the enzyme concentration is in the range of 0.125 to 1.0% (w/w), and wherein the treatment time is in the range of 30 min. to 2 hrs.

Claim 16. (Original): The method as claimed in claim 15 wherein the *Conidiobolus coronatus* is *Conidiobolus coronatus* deposited with the American Type Cell Culture (ATCC) depository under Accession Number PTA-4132.